



# Maricopa County Animal Care & Control

## *Proper Nutrition for Your Pooch*



Your companion canine relies on you to provide him with a proper diet every day. By feeding him one of the many high-quality foods currently available, it's easy to keep your dog happy and healthy.

### **Choosing a Food**

You may be surprised to learn that dogs cannot live on meat alone. As they are not solely meat eaters, canines require a diet that contains at least 50 percent carbohydrates. The remaining percentage should be comprised of protein, which builds bones and repairs tissue, and fat, for energy and metabolic maintenance.

When searching for a brand of food, consider your dog's age, body condition and life stage or lifestyle. Look for products produced by companies that demonstrate research, controlled feeding trials, and good manufacturing procedures and quality control. A premium-quality food will contain the right percentages of nutrients, along with necessary vitamins and minerals. Quality foods also include less filler, resulting in less waste in the yard.

Generally, it's advisable to avoid poor quality generic, "no brand" diets. Low price brands may reflect lower quality ingredients or less rigorous manufacturing standards.

### **The Challenge of Feeding Puppies**

Puppies need to eat specially formulated puppy food. They require up to twice the energy intake of adults per kilogram of body weight and need to have 25% to 30% of total energy provided by protein depending upon their breed. If puppies (particularly large and giant breed dogs) are allowed to over-eat, they may consume too many calories and too much calcium, grow too rapidly and develop bone growth problems and other serious clinical diseases. Therefore, with large and giant breed puppies, it is important to not overfeed. Controlled feeding of a balanced diet specifically made for large and giant breed puppies facilitates optimal skeletal development.

### **Canned vs. Dry Food**

Some owners prefer the easy clean-up and convenience of dry food.

For more information on animal care, behavior or AC&C programs contact (602) 506-PETS or visit [pets.maricopa.gov](http://pets.maricopa.gov)



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Meat-based canned foods offer a wide range of proteins and fats, but the excess sugar found in some foods can pack on the pounds and cause dental problems. If you do feed your dog canned food, make sure that you also feed him crunchy treats and give him safe toys (such as Nylabones) to exercise his gums and clean his teeth.

## **Water**

Dogs need to have good quality water available at all times to help meet the needs of their bodies. Insufficient water intake may affect an animal's physical activity, reproduction, lactation, growth, and especially in a desert environment, inadequate water supply could lead to death.

## **Feeding Schedule**

Once you find a food that pleases your dog, stick with it unless your veterinarian recommends a change due to illness, age or allergies. Follow the feeding instructions given by the manufacturer. And remember, these are guidelines. If your dog is too fat or thin, you should change the amount fed accordingly.

Maricopa County Animal Care & Control generally recommends that all dogs be fed twice daily. This means that the package feeding guidelines are divided into two meals spaced eight to twelve hours apart. Puppies, lactating mothers and animals recovering from certain medical conditions often require more than two

meals per day.

## **Dietary Supplements and Treats**

Your veterinarian may recommend dietary supplementation for animals with certain health conditions. Dogs with diabetes, for example, will benefit from a high-fiber diet. And nutraceutical supplements may help older animals with arthritis feel better. Many owners offer their dogs table foods as treats. Treats should make up no more than five to 10 percent of your animal companion's daily intake. Select easily digestible foods such as cooked rice, boneless and skinless chicken or turkey and scrambled eggs. Dogs love their fruits and veggies, too, so feel free to up their vitamin count with traditional canine favorites like carrots, apples and green beans. If you find, however, that your dog has a bout of vomiting or diarrhea, try to determine which table food is the problem and eliminate it. Biscuits are satisfying snacks, too, but opt for a sugar-free variety with natural ingredients.

It is important to monitor your dog's eating habits so you can notice when something is wrong. If your dog gains weight, experiences sudden weight loss or stops eating, consult your veterinarian immediately. Since your veterinarian is familiar with your dog's specific lifestyle and health issues, s/he is also a good resource to help you choose the appropriate diet.